

The Dipnetter

News of the River from the
Columbia River Inter-Tribal
Fish Commission



August 2011



Stuart Ellis

TRIBAL FALL FISHERY UPDATE AND FORECAST

BY CRITFC HARVEST BIOLOGIST STUART ELLIS

The 2011 fall season fishing season begins August 1. Platform and hook-and-line fisheries will be open for both subsistence purposes and commercial sale of chinook, steelhead, and coho. The tribes have not yet decided when commercial gillnet fishing will begin, but commercial fishers should be getting ready by mid-August. The pre-season forecasts, shown in the table below, indicates large returns. Actual treaty and non-treaty fisheries are limited under the *U.S. v. Oregon* Management Agreement that all four tribes signed. Fisheries will be adjusted during the season to make sure the impacts stay within the allowed limits. If the run comes in close to forecast, the tribes are allowed a 30% harvest

rate on upriver bright fall chinook and tribal fishers could have a very large chinook catch.

Based on the pre-season forecasts, we expect weekly gillnet fishing through September. The allowable harvest rate limit for Group B steelhead (larger steelhead measuring at least 31 inches) can be a constraint. The pre-season forecast for Group B steelhead is 54,100 which is close to the recent year average. Catch rates for Group B fish typically start increasing during the week of Labor Day. Fishing earlier and using mesh restrictions can be helpful ways to limit the Group B steelhead catch while still catching good numbers of chinook. 🐟

	EXPECTED RUN TO RIVER MOUTH	EXPECTED RUN TO BONNEVILLE DAM
FALL CHINOOK		
Upriver Bright Fall Chinook <i>(destined for areas upstream of McNary Dam and to the Deschutes)</i>	399,550	353,110
Mid-Columbia Bright Fall Chinook <i>(Primarily hatchery fish from Bonneville, Little White, Klickitat and Umatilla Hatcheries)</i>	99,260	60,140
Spring Creek Hatchery Tules	116,420	90,850
Total Fall Chinook	615,230	504,100
COHO		
Upriver Coho <i>(destined for areas upstream of Bonneville Dam)</i>	85,836	81,531
STEELHEAD		
Total Group A and B Steelhead	not forecast	366,800

Tribal Sovereignty Protected

BY DAVIS WASHINES, CRITFC ENFORCEMENT

During the 2011 Oregon State Legislature, Senate Bill 412 was introduced to address the jurisdictional void created when the Oregon Court of Appeals ruled in the case of *Kurtz v. Oregon* that tribal police officers were not “police officers” according to state law. This finding had to be addressed, as the ramifications meant that tribal police officers had no authority to arrest non-Indians or cite them into state court the way other state and local police officers can. This appellate court ruling created a public safety emergency on reservation lands and communities. The bill sought to provide authorized tribal police officers with certain powers and protection as provided to other Oregon law enforcement officers.

Since CRITFC officers are commissioned by CRITFC’s member tribes, the fixes contained in Senate Bill 412 would enhance their effectiveness by restoring the ability to cite non-Indians into state court for criminal violations occurring in Oregon. After the appellate court ruling, CRITFC officers sought and received special county deputy commissions from several counties in Oregon as a way to maintain limited state authority over non-Indians. The provisions under Senate Bill 412 would eliminate the need for this.

Senate Bill 412 was strongly supported by the tribes, but did meet opposition, especially from the Oregon State Sheriffs Association. Senate Bill 412 was ultimately passed by the Oregon state legislature. Governor Kitzhaber has stated

that he intends to sign the bill into law. Once he does, Oregon will become the second state, after Arizona, to enact such legislation. 🐟

Oregon Adopts Toughest Water Quality Standard in the U.S.

BY DIANNE BARTON, CRITFC WATERSHED DEPT

Oregon’s Environmental Quality Commission approved stringent new state water quality standards at its June meeting. The new standards take effect as early as this fall and will regulate more than 100 pollutants including mercury, flame retardants, PCBs, dioxins, plasticizers, and pesticides. CRITFC’s 1994 Fish Consumption Survey of tribal members played a major role in setting the new standards. A panel of experts determined this study to be the “study most relevant to Oregon fish consumers” and was used by Oregon’s Department of Environmental Quality to propose a fish consumption rate of 175 grams per day. This rate is ten times higher than the national fish consumption rate used to set previous water quality standards and is more protective of tribal members. The new standards aim to make Oregon waters safe for the consumption of about 23 fish meals per month.

Oregon’s water quality standards are the nation’s most stringent for toxic water pollution. Other states in the Pacific Northwest may soon follow suit. The State of Washington has already begun a review of its water quality standards to set priorities for surface water protection. 🐟

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WARM SPRINGS



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Have you caught a fish that looks like this?

BY BLAINE PARKER, CRITFC FISHERIES MANAGEMENT DEPT

The undetermined salmon species pictured here was caught in the first summer tribal fishery period in The Dalles pool. It has characteristics of both chinook and steelhead with fine spots over most of the body. Some other fish similar to this one have been reported by fish buyers in the past few years. Currently, genetic testing is being done on the fish at CRITFC's Hagerman Genetics Laboratory in Idaho in an attempt to determine whether it is a full species or possibly a hybrid.

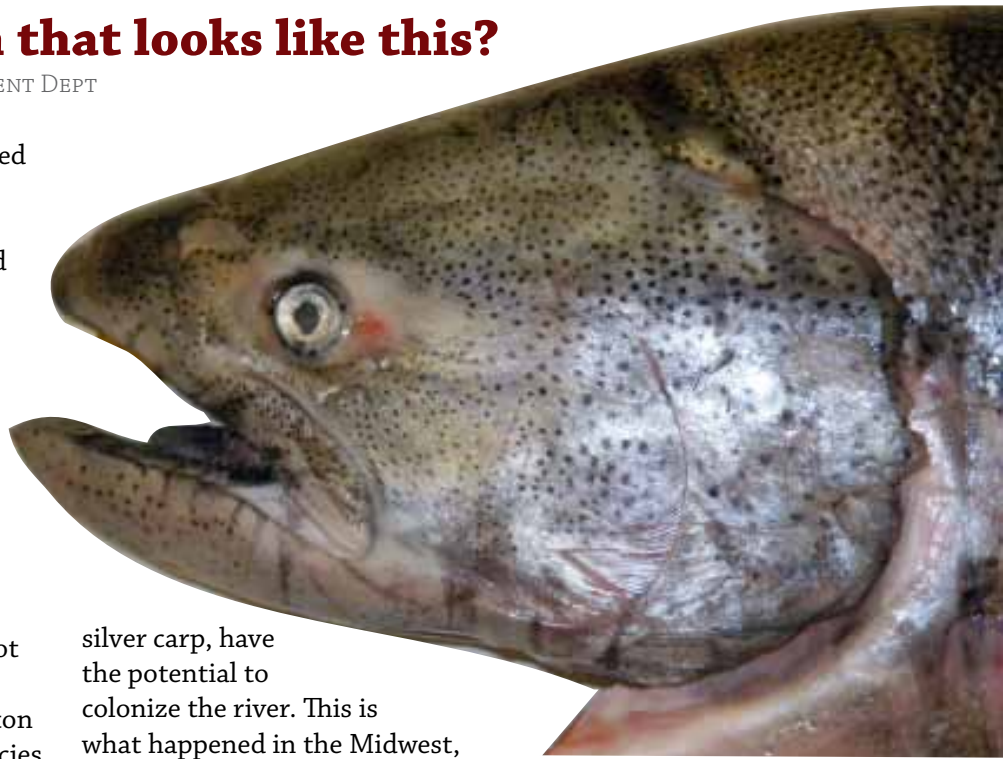
All of the fish pictured on this page have been caught in the Columbia River by tribal fishers. Atlantic salmon and grass carp are not native to the Columbia River. Both of these species are allowed by the states of Washington and Oregon as a commercial aquaculture species or for private individuals for pond management. However, when fish escape their ponds or net pens, often during flood events, they can end up in the Columbia River.



Atlantic salmon

Some locations in British Columbia and southeast Alaska have documented escaped Atlantic salmon (pictured above) spawning in the wild. Alaska has employed field crews to search for and kill spawning Atlantic salmon to protect their native stocks of salmon from competition by Atlantic salmon.

Another invasive species that has been caught in the Columbia River is the grass carp. They most likely escaped from coastal lakes where they were released to control weeds. This fish is originally from China and, along with of Asian carp species like the bighead carp and the



silver carp, have the potential to colonize the river. This is what happened in the Midwest, where they expanded throughout the Mississippi River basin after escaping from flooded fish ponds in the 1990's. Asian carp are a concern as they breed rapidly and can quickly occupy many different habitats and force out native species. 🐟

If you catch one...

If you catch a fish that looks like one of these or a fish that you and others do not recognize, it is very important that the fish not be thrown away or sold. The fish should be kept whole (**DON'T CLEAN IT!**), and on ice, if possible. Please contact Blaine Parker or Stuart Ellis at CRITFC's Fisheries Management Department (503) 238-0667. If you cannot reach us, contact CRITFE and/or deliver it to the CRITFE office in Hood River so the fish can be frozen. It is very important to scientifically investigate these fishes and document the sighting so it can be determined if new fish species are living in the Columbia River.



Grass carp



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Yakama • Warm Springs
Umatilla • Nez Perce



Honoring choosh

It was a good day for the Columbia River last month when the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality adopted new water quality standards based on the amount of fish that tribal members eat rather than on the national standard. Oregon worked to protect all its citizens. The new standard reflects the fact that tribal members rely on salmon and clean water. This important change is a direct result of the work of CRITFC and its member tribes as well as the many letters of support tribal members and fishers sent in.

This got me thinking about what we as Indian fishers can do to help protect our sacred *choosh*. There are so many ways that pollutants and contaminants can get into rivers and streams. One in particular is at locations where watercraft enter or leave the water. The tribes have exclusive or near-exclusive access to the river at 29 locations between Bonneville and McNary dams. We might not have primary control of what happens along the rest of the river, but we can do our part to reduce pollution in the water flowing

critfc executive director's message

past our in-lieu and treaty fishing access sites.

While the river might not be absolutely clean, simple practices we as Indian fishers can do will help. One is regular boat and truck maintenance. Boats or trucks that leak any fuel or oil can contaminate or degrade the river. The risk of trucks that haul boats is often overlooked, but these vehicles enter or come very close to the river when loading and unloading.

Another way to help keep the rivers cleaner is to throw away trash and other waste in appropriate locations. Also, be respectful of how you dispose of fish carcasses, guts, and heads. Please do not dispose of fish parts in slack water, near boat landings, or on open land. We need to honor our ancient teachings as well as be mindful of our modern-day neighbors. The tribal fishing sites should reflect our tribal value of caring for and protecting the environment.

Let us work to be examples of how to honor and respect *N'Chi Wana*. If we care for the water, it will care for us.



Paul Lumley
YAKAMA



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